

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE
INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE**

Refer to: IMS

ALBUQUERQUE AREA INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE CIRCULAR NO. 2000-01

INTERNET AND ELECTRONIC MAIL USAGE

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1. **PURPOSE.** The purpose of this circular is to establish policy for the Albuquerque Area Indian Health Service (AAIHS) regarding Internet and Electronic Mail (E-mail) usage. The AAIHS provides access to the Internet and use of E-mail to employees as a mechanism to enhance the delivery of patient care to the Native American population. The Internet is a very useful tool for providing information on topics relevant to patient care and obtaining information on IHS projects from colleagues, research, government regulations, etc. This policy delineates acceptable use of the Internet and E-mail by AAIHS employees, volunteers, and contractors when using Government-owned or leased equipment, facilities, Internet addresses, or domain names registered to the AAIHS.
2. **AUTHORITY.** This circular is established in accordance with 5 U.S. Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 2635, Executive Order 12674, CFR 301 and 41 CFR 201-21.
3. **BACKGROUND.** The Internet is comprised of thousands of interconnected networks, which provide digital pathways to millions of information sites. Because these networks subscribe to a common set of standards and protocols, users have worldwide access to Internet hosts and their associated applications and databases. Electronic search and retrieval tools permit users to gather information and data from a multitude of sources and to communicate with other Internet users who have related interests.

Access to the Internet provides employees of government agencies the opportunity to locate and use current and historical data from multiple sources worldwide in their decision-making processes. Employees, authorized volunteers and contractors of the AAIHS are encouraged to develop the skill necessary to effectively utilize these tools in the performance of their duties.

4. **POLICY.** The AAIHS promotes Internet and E-mail uses to enable employees to accomplish the IHS mission and encourage employees, volunteers, and contractor personnel to develop Internet skills and knowledge. While this technology has unlimited information to increase productivity it also has the potential for misuse. Misuse of the Internet and E-mail results in loss of productivity and the violation of applicable laws, security policy, patient confidentiality and the professional Standards of Conduct for the AAIHS employees. It shall be the policy of the AAIHS to adhere and comply with the guidelines set forth in this circular.

5. **DEFINITIONS.**

- a. **Albuquerque Area Indian Health Service:** Comprised of the Area Office, Service Units, Health Centers, Health Stations and Clinics.
- b. **Client:** A remote computer connected to a host or server computer. Also refers to the software that makes it possible.
- c. **Download:** To transfer programs or data from a computer to a connected device, usually from a server to a personal computer.
- d. **Electronic Mail (E-mail):** A message sent by computer from one user to another over a network.
- e. **E-mail Records:** Information with evidential, documentary, or long-term value. The following are examples of E-mail records:
 - 1. Minutes of meetings (not notification of meeting) with significant decisions, commitments or actions taken.
 - 2. Decisions and commitments reached orally (person to person, by telecommunications, or in conference) and not otherwise documented in program files.
 - 3. Requested comments on a draft action memorandum, if the E-mail message adds to a proper understanding of the formulation or execution of program action.
- f. **E-mail Non Records:** Information with no evidential documentary or long-term informational value, which can be deleted or destroyed once its purpose has been served. Examples include:
 - 1. Documents that contain information not intended for formal approval, comment or action.
 - 2. Blank forms, formats, or form letters stored on word processing.
 - 3. Duplicate copies of information maintained solely for ease of reference.

4. Personal work-related materials such as diaries, journals, calendars, schedules, draft documents, which do not meet the criteria of a record for purposes of the Federal Record Disposition Schedule.
- g. File: A named collection of information stored on a disk.
- h. Intranet: An in-house web site that services employees of the enterprise. Although Intranet pages may link to Internet, an Intranet is not a site accessed by the general public.
- i. Internet: The Internet (or "Net") is a network of linked computer networks that enables data communication services such as World Wide Web, file transfer, electronic mail, and newsgroups.
- j. Obscene Material: Offensive to accepted standards of decency or modesty. Offensive or repulsive to one's feelings.
- k. Server: A network computer to which users can connect to receive services such as file sharing.
- l. Personal Use: An activity that is conducted for purposes other than accomplishing official or otherwise authorized activity.
- m. Upload: To transfer a file from one computer (usually a smaller one -- a "client") to another computer (a larger one, a server or "host" computer).

6. **RESPONSIBILITIES.**

A. **Area Director:**

Area Director has the overall authority to establish and implement policies and procedures in accordance with applicable laws.

B. **Service Unit Director:**

Service Unit Director is responsible for employee's education and implementation of this policy in their service unit.

C. **Managers/Supervisors:**

1. Advise employees regarding the appropriate use of Internet and E-mail.
2. Responsible for the determination of appropriate Internet and E-mail activities. This shall include the acceptability of Internet sites visited and the determination of personal time versus official work hours.

D. Users:

Follow existing security policies and procedures in the use of Internet and E-mail services and refrain from any practices which might jeopardize computer systems and data files.

E. Division of Information Management Services: (IMS)

1. IMS, Albuquerque Area Office (AAO) is responsible to oversee the operation of the Internet and E-mail usage for the AAIHS.
2. Ensure Internet and E-mail usage is in accordance with set policy by monitoring the Internet usage patterns and transmitted/received files of employees.
3. Report any misuse to the appropriate official.

7. PROCEDURES.

A. Internet Usage:

- (1) Users shall not utilize the Intranet or Internet for purposes that violate federal, state or local laws, statutes, regulations and/or policies and procedures of IHS or AAIHS.
- (2) Users may utilize the Internet during working hours to access job-related information to meet the requirements of their duties.
- (3) Downloading/uploading of material protected by copyright laws and licensing procedures, as well as piracy of software is prohibited.
- (4) Users shall not engage in any activity, which would compromise the security of any AAIHS computer and shall not disclosed or share log-in passwords.
- (5) Users shall not access the Internet for any purpose that would reflect adversely upon or in any way interfere with the mission statement of IHS and/or AAIHS such as but not limited to the following activities: viewing sexually explicit materials, playing computer games, utilizing " chat rooms" , etc.
- (6) AAIHS facilities may not be used to intentionally propagate any viruses, disseminate chain letters, engage in political activities, engage in commercial activities (buying/selling products on the Internet) or transfer programs that disable or overload the local area network or wide area network.

- (7) Users shall not intentionally view obscene material. Obscene material of any type may not be downloaded for the purpose of distribution, storage, displaying or editing.
- (8) Users are prohibited from initiating nonwork-related Internet sessions using AAIHS information resources from remote locations. That is, users shall not access AAIHS resources from home or other locations for the purpose of participating in non job-related Internet activities.
- (9) Users shall not listen to radio broadcast utilizing the Internet, as this reduces the capacity available for transmitting patient record information.
- (10) The IMS, AAO will monitor Internet usage patterns and transmitted and/received files, to ensure Internet usage is in accordance with set policy.

B. Electronic Mail

- (1) E-mail usage shall be used for work related purposes, in the same manner as the telephone and the fax/copying machine.
- (2) E-mail documents are subject to the Privacy Act, Freedom of Information Act and the IHS Records Management Policy.
- (3) Users should not assume that E-mail is a secure system. Users should have no expectation of absolute privacy regarding the messages and attachments sent or received.
- (4) E-mail documents are either records or non-records. Users will follow the Records Management Policy (IHS Manual, Part 5, Chapter 15) on all E-mail documents.
- (5) All E-mail messages or attachments that meet the definition of a Federal record must be printed out in paper form and filed in the official paper filing system. This should be done as soon as possible after creation or receipt of the message. The message or attachment should then be deleted.
- (6) E-mail records are subjected to the IHS Records Disposition Schedule.

- (7) E-mail users shall not transmit confidential or sensitive information either as an E-mail message or as an attachment to a message, unless the document is encrypted (PHS Circular 93.01). This includes patient name, diagnosis or social security numbers. All aspects of the Privacy Act will pertain to the use of E-mail for any patient related information, images, etc.

C. Personal Use

Employees are permitted limited use of Internet and E-mail for personal needs provided the use does not interfere with official business or patient care and involves minimal additional expense to the Government. (" Limited Personal Use" of Government Office Equipment, (GSA) dated May 19, 1999)

Personal use means activity that is conducted for purposes other than accomplishing official or otherwise authorized activity.

1. Employees may, make limited use under this policy of the Internet to inquire into employee benefits (e.g., Thrift Savings Plan) or to seek employment.
2. During work break or lunchtime an employee may retrieve non-job related text and graphics, as long as it does not adversely affect the mission of IHS.
3. May not engage in personal commercial activities on the Internet, including offering services or merchandise for sale or ordering services or merchandise from on-line vendors.

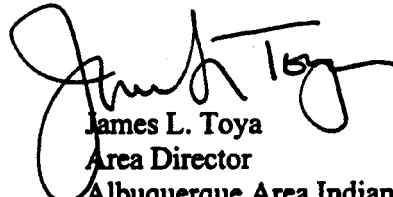
D. Game Policy

1. Games are not allowed on any government computer/laptops.
2. Employees shall not play, download, or install software games on computers.
3. Software games on government computers shall be removed by IMS.

E. Misuse

Employees are expected to conduct themselves professionally in the workplace and to refrain from using government computers for activities that are inappropriate. Unauthorized or improper use may result in disciplinary or adverse actions, criminal penalty an/or employees being held financially liable for the cost of improper use. Misuse or inappropriate personal use is prohibited.

8. **EFFECTIVE DATE.** This circular is effective upon date of signature and shall remain in effect until canceled or superseded.



James L. Toya
Area Director
Albuquerque Area Indian Health Service